



KENYÜ A CUSTOMARY LAW OF ANGAMI TRIBE: REFLECTIONS ON CULTURAL IDENTITY AND PRACTICE IN CONTEMPORARY ANGAMI SOCIETY

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ABSTRACT

This article discusses Kenyü of Angami customary law as an institution that influences cultural identity, social behaviour and community mobilisation in the town of Kohima, Nagaland, India. Field work material with a mixed-method design based on semi structured interviews, with 40 under-graduate Angami students in Kohima district are utilized as primary sources while literature from folklore, anthropology and legal studies are referred to explore the flexibility of customary law as a regulatory and cultural institution. The study reveals that Kenyü as reflected in prohibitions and taboos still functions as a moral edifice and an institution of legitimacy in which decision-making is arrived at through community consensus. Although Angami customary law faces hindrance from generational changes, Christianity, globalization, and encounters with state law as guaranteed by Article 371A of the Indian Constitution, it has developed beyond those obstructions by adapting and creating a new culture. Folklore and oral traditions take on paramount importance in passing these values from one generation to another, ensuring the continuity of culture while permitting reevaluation by younger generations in new circumstances. The study has shown that Angami customary law, and its basis on Kenyu, continues to serve as an effective vehicle for participation and conflict resolution in the communities, as a result, remains relevant in the socio-political fabric of Nagaland.

Keywords: Angami tribe, Customary Law, Modernization, Community Participation, Conflict Resolution, Storytelling Tradition

1. INTRODUCTION

Among the various anthropological studies, Angami people may be taken to illustrate themselves for an example of how cultural myths are related to the notion of identity and traditions laws. It is a law by hearsay written but an unwritten law that the people govern and are bound by and uphold the justice system, generation beyond generation. Angami customary law governs relationships, property rights, rituals and community solidarity and represents the bedrock of social control and conflict resolution. The continuing power of the institution is based on respect from the population and the ability to meet modern challenges while remaining close to traditional values. But as society transforms under the influence of modern technologies, including education, the Angami people must learn to balance the retention of old traditions with the challenges of the new. One of these customary laws is Kenyü, a significant part of Angami folklore, signifying haram or taboo or what is forbidden among the tribe, being both social and religious laws

regulating morality. It is what we impose on people and groups in order to avoid bad actions and to maintain social order. This article considers how this customary law binds those under it in a rapidly changing world.

2. METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a mixed-method approach, combining primary and secondary sources. Primary data was collected through semi-structured interviews with 40 Angami undergraduate students in Kohima district, while secondary data was gathered from books, journals, articles, reports, and online databases. A probability sampling method was used to select participants, though the study faced limitations such as reliance on oral traditions, generational gaps, and restricted resources.

2.1. DATA COLLECTION METHODS

Primary data included first-hand information from the respondents with semi structured interview schedule while Secondary Data includes already existing data and information like books, articles, reports, government documents, online databases (e.g., JSTOR, Scopus, Google Scholar).

Sampling Techniques: Probability of sampling

Sample size: 40 undergraduate students of Angami tribe based at Kohima District.

3. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Scholarly research on kenyü is still limited, and much of the available literature is scattered across folklore studies, anthropology, or oral traditions. This makes it challenging to build a strong theoretical base. Much of Angami customary law, including kenyü, has been preserved orally. Reliance on oral narratives may affect accuracy due to memory gaps, personal interpretation, or changes across generations. Some informants may withhold details or present information selectively. One very strong limitation is that younger Angami individuals, influenced by modernization and Christianity, may interpret or even disregard kenyü differently compared to elders. This generational gap can make it difficult to capture a uniform understanding of its significance in present society. Sample size can be a limitation at the same time financial resources and accessibility is a limitation.

3.1. PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF THE ESSAY

The paper explores how tradition and modernity intersect in the Angami society by examining the centrality of Kenyü and C.L manifested in folklore as a means of cultural identity. In exploring these stories, the analysis demonstrates how the Angami people link their past with the contemporary world. And it's not just storytelling but also the social and the political that determine how ancient customs can be perpetuated in a fast-changing world. By way of responding to Lorenz's call for the significance of cultural praxis, the present study aims to illustrate the power of cultural practices; the affinities these folktales generate, in spite of external issues. Ultimately, the essay hopes to promote critical thinking about how cultural identities are made and unmade, illustrating the ongoing struggle between the traditional and the adaptive aspects of Angami's adaptation to a more modern world.

3.2. CUSTOMARY LAW AND ITS ROLE IN ANGAMI SOCIETY

In today's changing society, the Angami tribe deals with a mix of old traditions and new influences. Their customary law, which is a key part of their cultural identity, provides guidance for social behavior and helps maintain community values and unity. This legal system covers rules about marriage, land ownership, and resolving conflicts, helping to keep a sense of belonging and continuity despite changes. Yet, as outside pressures grow, such as globalization and different legal systems, the Angami people try to find a careful balance between keeping their old customs and bringing in new practices that strengthen their society. This situation is clearly shown in Angami folktales, where stories illustrate the struggles and agreements between these different forces, creating a rich cultural identity that respects the past while looking to the future (John Henry Hutton, 1921).

Cultural identity is deeply rooted in the customary law among the Angami tribes so as in other tribes of Nagaland. These customary laws were initially imparted by the elders and members of the village council though at first obligatory social norms, which then evolved into binding laws guiding acceptable conduct and communal living among the Angami tribe (Respondents).

3.3. CHARACTERISTICS OF CUSTOMARY LAW

In the culture of the Angami tribe, customary law is important for their values and social norms. It acts as a key part of their identity and governance. These unwritten legal rules are passed down through the generations, based on the community's shared experiences, and show the unique way the Angami people view the world. Customary law is flexible, allowing it to respond to modern challenges while keeping its key principles intact, showing the tribe's strength in a changing world. This ability to adapt helps customary law deal with the challenge of maintaining old customs while also engaging with new legal systems and social changes. Balancing these elements is essential, as it helps the community stay united and keeps cultural expressions alive, especially when faced with globalization. Finally, the ongoing respect for customary law found in Angami folktales demonstrates how these stories help preserve cultural identity as society changes (John Henry Hutton, 1921).

Village elders act as custodians and interpreters of customary law, sharing wisdom at communal gatherings (thehouba) and making case decisions without written statutes (Respondents).

Table1 Key Characteristics of Customary Law.

Characteristic	Description
Origin	Customary law originates from long-standing traditions and practices within a community.
Flexibility	Customary law is often more adaptable to changing circumstances compared to formal legal frameworks.
Community Acceptance	For customary law to be effective, it must be recognized and accepted by the community members.
Unwritten Nature	Many customary laws are not codified but are passed down through generations orally.
Cultural Reflection	Customary laws reflect the cultural values, norms, and traditions of the community they govern.
Dispute Resolution	Customary law often includes mechanisms for resolving disputes within the community contextually.

(Glenn, 2007)

Unwritten law, however, is not in general codified and is handed down viva-voce from generation to generation. It exists in the people's historical progressive memory and is sustained by rituals, customs, oral traditions (Oba, 2002). It derives its power from the acceptance of the community. Only when a majority continuously feel a duty to act in a given way does practice become that of customary law (Allott, 1969). Customary law is not prescriptive; it changes with the social, cultural, and economic developments within the community and therefore, it differs from the formal court laws (Menski, 2006). It embodies the customs, mores and ethos of a given society, frequently linked to religion, kinship and locality (Woodman, 1996). Instead of modern state courts, customary law is administered by elders, councils of traditional leaders, or community authorities. Sanctions are prohibitions or penalties which can range from fines or rituals to ostracism (Oba, 2002). In legal systems characterized by legal pluralism, indigenous or customary law can exist alongside official or statutory law, recognized in say, family law, land, or inheritance, by constitutions or courts (Benton, 2012).

3.4. EVOLUTION OF THE ANGAMI TRIBE AND THEIR CUSTOMARY LAW

Their customary law is the identity of the Angami added with factors of history and culture. These laws served society well for a long time, grounded in ancient wisdom that forms the morals and rules of the community. This growth was punctuated by significant episodes, such as the Angami encounters with colonial powers, which compelled them to re-examine their laws and customs in response to external influence. The complication was worsened by the advent and spread of Christianity, which challenged ancient beliefs and culture, and therefore called for a balancing act between the past and present. The historical evolution of customary law of the Angami is so closely linked with the ongoing of their culture, even as the Angamis face the challenges of modernization that their customary law served them and continue to thus so doing, and the key point of discussions have been touching their cultural story as a people, the system of governance and their efforts to maintain their pride in a more globalized world, and as observed by (Heneise et al., 2016) et al.; together, these two volumes demonstrate the continuing significance of traditional practices in the present.

Table 2 Development of Customary Law among the Angami (The Morung Express, 2022)

Year	Land Dispute Resolutions	Cases Resolved through Customary Law	Percentage of Cases Resolved
2000	150	120	80%
2005	175	140	80%
2010	200	160	80%
2015	250	200	80%
2020	300	240	80%

3.5. KENYÜ AND ITS SIGNIFICANCE IN ANGAMI CULTURE

Kenyü translates directly as “forbidden” and encompasses a wide range of taboos, superstitions, and moral codes unique to the Angami tribe. Describing it as an Angami expression that prohibits certain actions and reinforces both customary law and collective identity. Kenyü stands as a foundational moral code in Angami culture, governing individual conduct for the benefit of the community. It is both a practical proscription of behavior and a symbolic cornerstone of Angami collective identity (Punyü, 2022).

Kenyü means something is strictly not to be done, and its authority in Angami society is both binding and deeply respected. There are many types of kenyü such as mocking disabled persons is kenyü, It is kenyü to eat a conjoined banana, as doing so is believed to result in the birth of twins, stealing from a house destroyed by fire, It is kenyü to share chili, as this is believed to cause quarrels between the two involved, to avoid negative omens or embarrassment, it is kenyü to cut hair after nightfall, marriage between siblings is kenyü, intentional murder and theft. This were all taught to every Angami right from his/her childhood (Respondents)

3.6. HISTORICAL ORIGINS OF KENYÜ

The evolution of the Angami tribe shows that the cultural story around Kenyü is very important to their identity, closely connected to their traditional practices. The historical roots of Kenyü are found in the tribe's shared memory, reflecting values that have supported them through many years. As these stories changed, they began to include both the importance of old traditions and the effects of modern life, showing an active interaction between the past and the present. This mix is especially clear in Angami folktales, where these tales are not just ways to pass on culture but also help in shaping identity. In this way, Kenyü stands for a strong cultural system, dealing with current issues while still tied to its historical roots (John Henry Hutton, 1921).

The Angami social structure is greatly shaped by Kenyü, an important traditional institution that helps keep community order and cultural traditions alive. This system not only represents the shared identity of the Angami people, but it also acts as a governing body that upholds social standards and moral behavior among its members. In this setting, Kenyü works as a way to settle disputes, promoting discussions that follow traditional laws and values, thereby making sure that new issues don't weaken cultural values. Additionally, this institution helps teach younger generations, sharing lessons based on the tribe's history and traditional stories that show their identity and background. By creating a connection between old ways and modern challenges, Kenyü plays a key role in managing social structure in the Angami community, helping maintain unity and the ability to adapt in a fast-changing world (Lucy Zehol, 1998).



Figure 1(Field Survey): various aspects of the role of Kenyü in social organization, highlighting its influence on community and cultural continuity.

Generally, *kenyü* forms a crucial ethical code that prohibits wrongful actions and enforces respect, unity, and discipline within society. *Kenyü* uplifts both individuals and the community by guiding people to live harmoniously and avoiding actions that would displease God or harm social relations. It is a binding rule never to be disobeyed believed to be enforced by spiritual consequences for violations (Respondents).

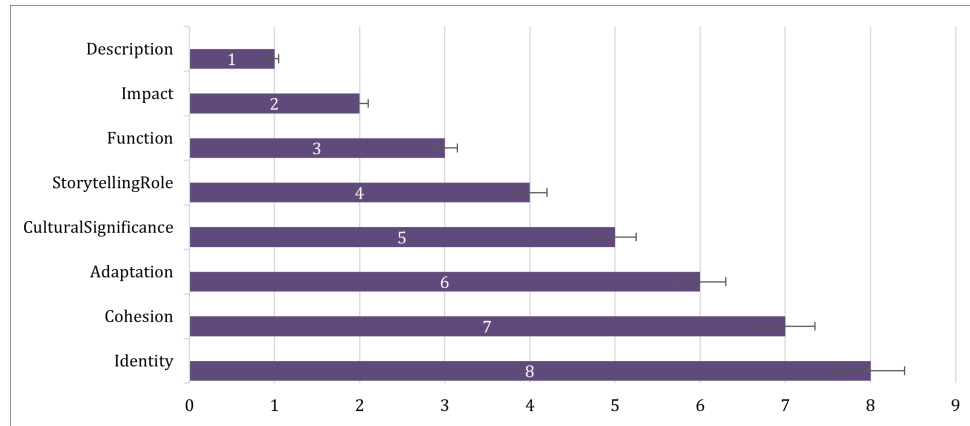


Figure 2 (Field Survey): various roles that respected elders play in the *Kenyü* process, highlighting their mediation functions, cultural significance, and contributions to community cohesion and identity.

Disputes are generally settled by means of customary mechanisms, such as mediation by respected elders and village councils. *Kenyü* is a serious violation and calls for a community response in which the offender is called to account, reconciliatory talks are held, and restitution or punishment is imposed. Respondents also characterize *kenyü* as having a powerful psychological effect, making people refrain from negative behavior out of respect for community norms and fear of metaphysical or social retribution. The *kenyü* has a set of rules in the event of disputes, which is responsible for encouraging parties to present themselves, with the help of their community elders or village councils, to give testimony and to talk openly and honestly about complaints. *Kenyü* also give authority to enforcing bodies by making sure that warring groups know what they have done is serious and the community has an interest in making them 'sit down' and work out their problems rather than thinking just for themselves (Respondents)

4. FUNCTION OF KENYÜ ON MORALS AND ETHICS

"The juxtaposition of old traditions and new ideas is just one of the complexities in Angami culture, including in the manner in which the community today interprets the values and morals of the *Kenyü*. We can see Angami's deep reverence for ancestral knowledge in Angami folktales, as well as its attempts to address contemporary predicaments. The tales of *Kenyü* also serve as a moral guide for individuals within the community to make decisions in their everyday lives, thereby contributing to a sense of collective identity (Das: 2002). This tradeoff underscores our need to have ethical standards grounded in local laws so that, as social pressures from outside rise, they don't weigh too heavily on us. The tales are to the Angami tribe what the myths are to those of more civilized communities, saving, perhaps the copious introduction of hocus-pocus that that word imply; with this difference, that, while they preserve for them the traditions of their tribe, and maintain their race in a way, these traditions chanting are doing for them what these myths have done for such races as ours, assimilate their values to the world in a process of rapid transition, and incorporate the traditions with the new ideas in such a manner as to form them to some extent (John Henry Hutton, 1921).

4.1. MODERN APPLICATIONS OF KENYÜ IN EVERYDAY LIFE

In more recent years, the Angami have demonstrated the way they are trying to reconcile their traditional lifestyle with the demands of a qualitatively new world, particularly with regard to *Kenyü*. You could describe this balance as younger people adopting modern values but refusing to let go of their cultural heritage. Mythology renown Angami warrior and folk hero Jina *Kenyü* *Kenyü* temple is situated on the foothills of Jakhama if *Kenyü*, the bedrock of Naga civilization, is to be revived, [clarification needed] Some traditional laws and customs of the Angami could be evolved

Cherry, J.M. A Compendium of the Tribes and Customs of the District of Gangmum (Stockholm: Ethnographical Museum of Sweden, 1977)106. Community leaders, for example are using modern educational methods to teach Kenyü illustrations along with old storytelling techniques making, a mix of cultures that the younger people are drawn to. This tactic has played a role in keeping customary law vibrant and in stimulating dialogue in the age of dominant global influences around the question of cultural identity (Lucy Zehol, 1998).

4.2. THE DYNAMIC OF CUSTOMARY LAW AND THE POSITIVE LAW SYSTEM

In the morass of legal governance, the Angami tribal people's norm and the official legal order meet. It is the vital link between maintaining a cultural identity and modern social requirements. The personal relationships and settlement of disputes are governed by customary law applying the commonly held beliefs and practices of the community. This makes it easier for the Angami to maintain a connection to their culture's history. But the development of formal legal systems, in some instances, can conflict with these customary practices and make us question our cultural ways as globalization expands. This two-track legal system through which the Angami control their webs of obligations permits them to preserve their own traditional identity, as we see they do in their oral tales, especially in the way they connect customary practices to the fashioning of community ties and individual identity. The tension between the retention of tradition and the imposition of modern law is the cultural crux of the Angami way of life." (John Henry Hutton, 1921).

No Indian parliament act shall, in respect of Naga religious or social practices and Naga customary law, apply to Nagaland unless the legislature of Nagaland by a resolution so decides (Article 371A, Ao, 2014). This brings some constitutional protection to Angami customary law, which includes kenyü.

The traditional village councils were given a formal structure by the Nagaland Village Council Act, 1978. Village councils among the Anagami's serve as arbiters of the customary law and adjudicate cases related to land, inheritance, marriage, and community practices (Zutshi, 2003).

The customary law regime operates side-by-side with the India-centred formal legal system, village elders common courts dealing with civil, criminal, and non-criminal issues based on customary law. These customary courts offer swift and affordable justice based on reconciliation and restoration and non-retributive justice. Angami customary law teaches mercy and grace to the offender as well. Even as on today the Angami people have heart to forgive the wrong and puts everything in the hands of God (Respondents)

Angami customary law is modified by the impact of Christianity, modern education and Indian law on it. Though a growing number of younger generations resort to formal courts with property and employment disputes, customary institutions continue to flourish in cultural issues, including marriage, land tenure, and festivals (Joshi, 2007)

4.3. PROBLEMS WITH TRADITIONAL LAW IN THE MODERN ERA

In contending with the challenges of contemporary society, the Angami tribe confronts significant challenges that test the strength of its customary law. With the advent of globalization, such constraints become looser and traditional customs disappear as foreign models transform social institutions and legal systems. Increasingly, younger generations follow a modern way of life and modern values that is a gap with oral traditions and customs that are the support of the legal system. This is a war that threatens not only to destroy customary laws but also raises questions of how useful and relevant they are in the face of a rapidly changing world. Moreover, the presence of legal pluralism further complicates this situation, since the state laws conflicting native customs making members of the community to be in an arbitrated legal environment. These are important challenges in how the Angami can retain their ethnic identity and remain resilient in the face of change without sacrificing their legal inheritance (Anthony D. Smith, 2009-02-02).

This diagram depicts the issues related to cultural identity, in particular, the consequences and the problems of solutions next to Globalization, Legal Pluralism, and Modern Lifestyles. The blue and orange bars represent the word count of the impacts and the resolution difficulties, respectively, thus demonstrating the different degrees of difficulties in preserving cultural practices and laws.

4.4. THEMES AND MOTIFS IN ANGAMI LORE

The intricate interconnections of Angami “folktales” are significant in revealing the way Angamis express their culture and identity. These tales frequently manifest a profound reverence for nature, an overlaying of general concepts of strength, fellow feeling, and moral understanding, which by necessity and for the sake of human welfare are necessary for social cohesion. These oral stories commonly focus on experiences of hardship in which characters learn the importance of tradition and the need for conformity to the community’s rules, the *kenyü* that informs right action and decision. Also, names of songs and dances seem more documentary than conventional, and Angami folktales have two functions: to preserve and sustain the old customs, and to demonstrate how the community copes with modernity (Anthony D. Smith, 2009-02-02).

Table 3 Thematic Classification of Angami Folktales

Theme	Description	Examples
Cultural Identity	Folktales are a mirror of the exclusive cultural customs and beliefs of the Angami tribe.	Narratives that highlight traditional ways, togetherness, and honoring one’s forebearers.
Nature and Environment	The Angami folktales generally reflect the bond between man and nature.	Stories involving animals as main characters or with a theme of environmental responsibility.
Moral Lessons	A lot of these folklores carry deep moral lessons, like all folklores.	Tales that demonstrate the fruits of greed, honesty and other virtues.
Heroic Journeys	Many Angami stories are associated with bravery and adventure.	Stories of heroes who are inspired to do great things, who face challenges and fight for their glory or to rebalance the world.
Mythical Elements	Weaving in mythical creatures and magical happenings adds depth to the narrative.	Supernatural influences over humans by spirits or deities.

5. FOLKTALES AND MORAL LESSONS IN SCHOOL

An important strand of cultural health among the Angamis is their adept use of folktales, which serve as potent vehicles for moral infusion. The tales are not only delightful, the brothers said, but also have greater lessons to teach about societal values, individual obligations to the community and personal integrity. Folktales, replete with symbolism and archetypal characters, reflect the beliefs and cultural identity of the community, enabling them to counter modern influences and maintain their traditional ways. For example, the reporting of virtues should be on themes like honesty, courage, respecting elders, which should stimulate the young minds to imbibe those values in the present context. Adding local customs to these stories, the Angami are keeping their lifestyle alive, giving members a sense of history and continuity, even amidst societal transformations. Hence the folklore serves as a school for teaching morality to the community and inculcating the members in the feeling of common identity (John Henry Hutton, 1921).

5.1. FOLKTALES AS GUARDIAN OF LANGUAGE AND DIALECT

The tension between maintaining culture and contemporary life appears in sharp relief in Angami folktales, crucial to the preservation of the tribe’s language. In such tales, the local dialect used conveys Angami lore and wisdom, thereby providing a sense of community and identity. Each fairytale, with its moralistic undertones, contains a historical value and a language perhaps on the verge of erosion despite globalisation and diversity. By recounting these stories, the Angami pass on their language and expound on values that continue to influence current day social conduct and traditional law. As a result, folktales serve as material for cultural resonance, blending old traditions with contemporary life and ensuring that future generations remain connected to their distinctive linguistic heritage (Christopher Moseley, January 2010-01-01).

5.2. FOLK TALES AS MEDIUM OF CULTURAL TRANSMISSION THROUGH GENERATION

Storytelling holds cultural relevance and identity among the Angamis, bridging the gap between tradition and contemporary living. Folktales communicate the lessons of *kenyü* and *adat* law, demonstrating not only the historical values of the tribe, but also how those values endure as the tribe grapples with new challenges. And over the ensuing generations, these stories have been woven into the fabric of Angami life to pass down moral, social and civic lessons,

norms of conduct and character. Folktales act as a treasury of cultural memory, striking a balance between reverence for ancestral knowledge and openness to the new. It is by engaging the young in their vibrant heritage that the Angami articulate a living cultural identity that mutates and yet also remains grounded in tradition (Anthony D. Smith, 2009-02-02). In this regard, folktales emerge as a powerful resource for maintaining traditions, traditions, and for reflecting on the future of the Angami way of life.

5.3. THE IMPACT OF MODERNIZATION ON THE STORYTELLING TRADITION

The complicated relationship between old traditions and new ideas gives both problems and chances for cultural expression in the Angami storytelling tradition. As stories that used to be shared in community settings are affected by modernization, the Angami people must find a way to keep their rich folklore while adapting to today's world. This change is clear in how modern media affects storytelling, with younger indigenous individuals often paying more attention to global stories rather than local tales, which can weaken their cultural ties (Douglas, 2016). Nonetheless, placing traditional stories in modern contexts can also bring these narratives back to life, fostering a renewed link to past wisdom. For the Angami people, this mixture reflects larger societal shifts, where storytelling acts to maintain cultural identity and a tool for community resistance against outside challenges (Heneise et al., 2016).

Table 4 Influence of new media, opportunities for cultural reinvention, and challenges in storytelling.

Influence/ Opportunity/Challenge	Impact	Youth Engagement / Engagement	Cultural Connection / Ancestral Link
New Media	Facilitates access to diverse narratives	Greater participation of young members of the community	Bridge to revival of cultural customs can act as a bridge to the revival of cultural customs
Cultural Reinvention	Promotes revitalization of folklore	Higher engagement levels observed	Enables the inclusion of old-world tales in new-world settings
Nostalgia vs. Innovation	Risk of alienating community members	Difficulties to reach and keep the same audience	Highlights the value of balancing tradition and modern storytelling

(Field Survey)

The Angami community faces challenges and opportunities from globalization and modern life, affecting the future of Kenya and traditional law in folktales. By engaging with these stories, the community can support its cultural heritage while also shaping its identity in a changing world. Including modern themes in traditional folktales could help revive Kenya, making it more relevant and understandable for younger people who may favor contemporary influences. This blend also creates a chance for important discussions about how customary law fits into today's society, helping it to stay alive as a part of Angami culture rather than becoming outdated. Therefore, mixing tradition with new ideas is crucial for reinforcing the importance of Kenya and customary law in the future story of Angami identity (Anthony D. Smith, 2009-02-02).

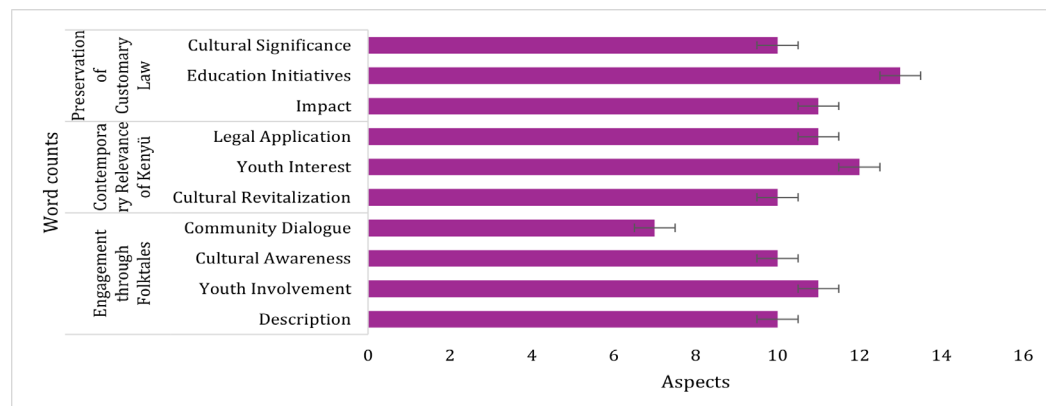


Figure 3 (Field Survey): Graphical presentation illustrates key aspects of cultural engagement and preservation, displaying the word

6. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF FOLKTALES IN THE MODERN WORLD

In relation to the correlation between tradition and contemporary life, the relevance of folktales is more visible in today's context with the Angami tribe. Such stories are repositories of cultural identity, but they are also coping with mechanisms for the modern, for accommodation with the changes that have occurred and with modernity itself, even as traditional modes of living are preserved. Angami folk tales that are about moral ideals and habits, would reach out to the younger generation struggling with the pressures of globalisation and urban lifestyle. By listening to and telling these stories, the community reaffirms its shared values and its distinct identity and gains a source of strength in the face of cultural erosion. And reimagining these stories for now makes them indicate they can change and are therefore still compelling and relevant for contemporary audiences. In the final analysis the permanent value of these stories lies in the degree in which they will help to save what can be saved of culture and tradition from the grinding tyranny of a mechanical age (John Henry Hutton, 1921).

In the folklore of the people of Angami, this coming together of the old and the new in one story epitomizes the strength of a culture. While the Angami struggle in the face of modernity, their stories of *Kenyü*, manifest both a firm grasp of old values and a clever adaptation to new circumstances. These stories embody the soul of community identity, serving as a media to transfer social moral bon ton and cultural tradition to generations, meanwhile dealing with contemporary issues such as social justice and personal rights. They combine ancient ways with a world in flux, in an effort to keep their culture hanging out to dry, literally keeping conversations in the family to preserve their past and build their future. This delicate balance demonstrates that the tribe members are also able to evolve without sacrificing their core beliefs, suggesting broader issues of identity in an increasingly interconnected world (Lucy Zehol, 1998).

With the introduction of Article 371A of the Indian Constitution which protects the right of Nagas, including Angami's, who preserve their customary laws even as modern systems gain ground especially in times of Indian judiciary. These adaptations showcase how community norms are continuously adjusted and not abandoned (Respondents)

6.1. COLLECTIVE DECISION-MAKING IS GREATLY INFLUENCED BY THE ANGAMI TRADITIONAL LAW

Participatory character of Angami customary law is its central characteristic. Clan elders make up village councils, which make decisions on land disputes, inheritance, marriage, and social behavior. It is not just the leaders who participate, so do the other people in the community who air their ideas through discussion sessions in which decisions are often made by consensus rather than by majority vote (Ao, 2002). These formal sanctions, known as *kenyü* (penalty of words) serve to keep the peace. These sanctions are intended to restrict, not just to punish, so as to mend yet strained relations between disputing parties. By engaging disputants and the community at large in reconciliation efforts, Customary Law enhances a sense of community (Venuh, 2005).

It's not only a law of tradition which conserves the interests for the community decision-making, conflict resolution and management of resources. By incorporating participatory ethics in conventional governance, customary law sustains cultural identity as well as guarantees that a mutually agreed social order is established and maintained through consensus and collective effort (Respondents)

In a rapidly modernizing Angami society, the significance of *Kenyü* vis-à-vis customary law as central to the preservation of identity is highlighted. "These old stories preserve the fundamental ethics and community spirit of the Angami and also provide guidance for solving present-day problems or for directing behavior within the community." Through the oral genre of *Kenyü*, younger people come to know their cultural ancestry and moral norms of the society. This deliberate sharing of knowledge ensures that the core of Angami identity remains strong, even in a rapidly changing world flexible yet unshakable. Ultimately, the commitment to preserving both these cultural narratives and customary laws, is a testament to respect for the ancestors that consolidates a collective Angami identity but acknowledges that some aspects of contemporary life can complement their culture (Respondents).

7. CONCLUSION

The study showed some of the challenges of retaining cultural identity in the contemporary world. The *Kenyü* and its customary norms are pivotal to the community for its cultural heritage, but the transforming world presses the

Angami people with both the struggles and opportunities. These stories, rooted in tradition, illustrate how the community tries to preserve its culture while evolving. As these young people become exposed to world trends, folklore serves as a critical look at how to preserve these old customs while embracing new concepts. Altogether, the fusion of tradition and modernity in stories of Angami folklore reveals an active cultural identity, and to some extent, it witnesses continuity and dialogue between the past and the present. So here are ideas that showcase how folklore can be an invaluable tool in comprehending culture and how finely the line needs to be treated to remain relevant in an ever changing society. Community members revise old laws to suit present circumstances, retaining that which maintains cultural integrity but using mechanisms for justice and governance from the modern world. Some rituals and festivals continue to exist as living memories of the past and components of customary law change to reflect new socio-economic circumstances. Hybrid norms and resilience As demonstrated above, this integrative process does not freeze the past in time nor is its product entirely new.

In a corpus regarding Angami folktales, a specific story is clearly expressed as to the relation and the effects of that connection between customary law and identity. These stories are full and combine with the notions of kenyü customs, which are a significant aspect to the community, into the daily lives of the Angami. With all the modern influences seeping into their culture, the tribe is finding it difficult to maintain these traditions as well as embrace change. Crucial results of the present study suggest that folktales act not only as the carriers of cultural wisdom, but also as a tool to confront contemporary issues, allowing them to hold onto their moral compass. Angami's capacity to preserve these stories is a function of the value they place in their culture, revealing a community adept at reconciling a sense of longing for the past with the necessity of progress. These findings underscore the extent which customary law remains influential in shaping the Angami self in a rapidly changing global world.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

None.

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None.

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